

Juda students urged to take pledge to never text and drive

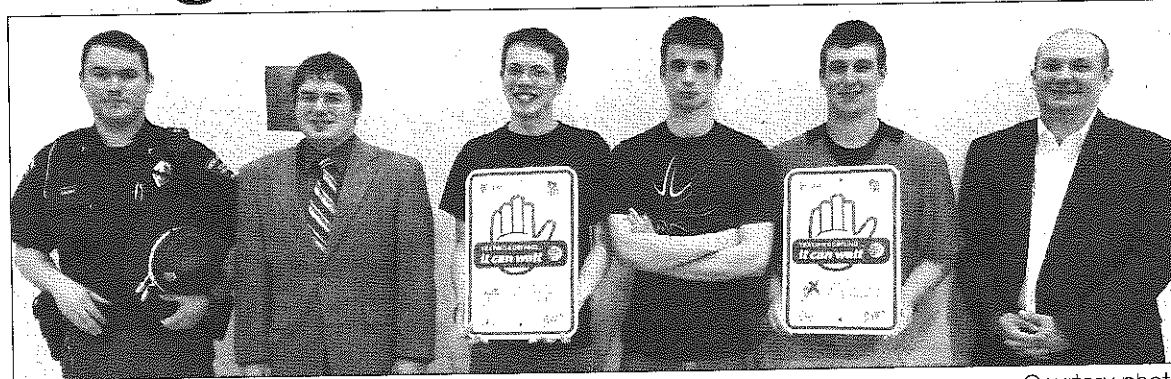
JUDA — Over 175 students from the Juda School District learned April 20 about the dangers of texting while driving and were urged to take the pledge to never text behind the wheel at www.ItCanWait.com.

The Juda School District teamed up with AT&T, AAA, the Wisconsin State Patrol and Rep. Mark Spreitzer as part of the It Can Wait® movement to remind students that text messages can — and should — wait until after driving.

“Too often our young people believe they are invincible, but they need to know that texting while driving is extremely dangerous and can be deadly,” said Traci Davis, Superintendent - Principal for the Juda School District. “We hope our students take the It Can Wait message to heart and take the pledge to never text and drive.”

Monday’s assembly was part of a series of events being held at high schools across the state this school year by AT&T, AAA and the Wisconsin State Patrol to drive home the dangers of texting and driving and encourage teens to take the pledge.

During the event, teens learned about “#X” — a new social tool introduced as part of the It Can Wait® campaign that is geared toward helping teens stop texting and driving. The school was also presented with



AT&T, AAA and the State Patrol teamed up to warn Juda students about the dangers of texting and driving. Pictured left to right are: Trooper Matthew Ackley, Rep. Mark Spreitzer, students Jason Roth, Daniel Skoumal and Trent Davis, and Nick Jarmusz from AAA.

two permanent It Can Wait® parking lot signs that remind students to never text and drive.

“Our It Can Wait campaign has always targeted teens, as they are not only our newest and most inexperienced drivers, but also the most prevalent texters,” said Scott T. VanderSanden, president of AT&T Wisconsin. “#X is simple, quick to enter and easily shareable, and we hope it will act as a digital rallying cry for teens and others to help end this deadly epidemic.”

“#X” is a tool that teens can use to pause a text or social conversation before beginning to drive. The symbol is a way for teens to quickly let their friends know that they are about to drive and won’t be responding to texts or social

media until they arrive safely at their destination.

Students were given the chance to experience the dangers of texting while driving in a safe setting through AAA’s distracted driving simulator. They were also shown a powerful documentary produced by AT&T called “The Last Text” that shares real stories about lives ended by someone’s decision to text and drive.

AT&T first launched the It Can Wait® campaign in 2009 to educate the public about the dangers of texting while driving and encourage consumers to take the pledge to not text and drive at www.ItCanWait.com. The campaign has now turned into a national social movement with support from organizations all across the country, including

the Wisconsin State Patrol and AAA. Since 2010, AT&T, AAA and the State Patrol have partnered together to hold events in 68 cities throughout Wisconsin, reaching over 29,000 high school students.

“Texting while driving is a dangerous mix that can have deadly consequences,” said State Rep. Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit). “While Wisconsin bans the practice, we know too many people still text behind the wheel, especially our teens. Through today’s assembly, we hope Juda’s teens understand the dangers and take the pledge to never text and drive.”

The It Can Wait® movement is making a difference, inspiring over 6.3 million pledges to never text and drive. One in three people who have seen

the texting while driving message also say they’ve changed their driving habits.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety recently completed a groundbreaking naturalistic study of teen crashes, which revealed that teens who were texting prior to a crash had taken their eyes off the road for an average of 4.1 out of the last six seconds before impact.

“The dangers of texting are greatest for teen drivers who cannot draw upon previous experience to manage unsafe situations,” said Vicki Hanson, Regional President of AAA Wisconsin. “We encourage parents to reinforce the It Can Wait campaign at home by implementing a parent-teen driving agreement.”

A copy of AAA’s sample driving agreement and other teen driving resources can be found at www.TeenDriving.AAA.com.

Wisconsin’s law, effective as of December 1, 2010, prohibits sending an e-mail or text message while driving and imposes a fine of up to \$400. As a primary enforcement law, officers may stop and ticket drivers solely for texting and driving. Wisconsin is among 41 states and the District of Columbia that ban text messaging by all drivers.

For more information on the It Can Wait® campaign, visit: ItCanWait.com.

Courtesy photo